

Appendix B

Liaison Personnel

Liaison, in the military sense, refers to contact or intercommunication maintained between parts of an armed force to ensure mutual understanding and unity of purpose and action. It is often aided by the exchange of personnel to facilitate an exchange of information. Liaison is therefore a vital function that assumes increased importance in the conduct of multinational operations.

RANK

An LNO must have sufficient rank and authority to speak for his commander. Many armies are extremely rank conscious and will not deal with an LNO of lesser rank. As a rule, the LNO should be of equal rank to the chief of staff or executive officer.

CHARACTERISTICS

LNOs must be soldiers of quality and experience, able to represent their commander's intentions and report objectively to him. On occasion, they may make decisions on behalf of the commanders they represent. LNOs do not merely convey decisions after the fact. The commander consults his LNO during planning for advice on how to employ his country's forces and how to convey the orders.

Of prime importance is the personality of the LNO. He must inspire and encourage friendliness, confidence, and comradeship with the officers and members of the unit from which he seeks information. He must establish himself as an integral working part of the headquarters. He must always respect the military procedures and customs of the unit to which assigned and observe the established channels of staff and command functions. If he needs further verification or more detail on a subject, the LNO must request them diplomatically. In realizing that he personally represents his commander, the LNO must react accordingly. If problems are caused by personalities, the LNO's commander must iron them out or change liaison assignments. Cooperation is the objective of all parties; personality problems should not interfere. The LNO must be thoroughly familiar with command and staff procedures, operations, and Army organization, to include a detailed knowledge of the table of equipment of his parent unit and that of the unit to which he is sent. To get the most from information obtained at the visited headquarters, the LNO must keep up to date on the situation, which may prove to be conducive to obtaining more information from the visited headquarters. The old adage "As you give, so shall you receive" should be his guide in this respect.

Because they are not impressed with the value of their assignments, many LNOs see their role as nothing more than glorified messengers. This lack of

enthusiasm is furthered by the receiving headquarters' reception of LNOs, which can usually best be described as indifferent. The visiting liaison personnel are told where to wait for their information. A situation map may be provided, and they may only receive information deemed essential by the visited headquarters. Such attitudes and procedures stifle, somewhat, the personal initiative and abilities of liaison personnel. It is the LNO's responsibility to improve this situation.

Very often the professional LNO can help prevent last-minute changes by participating in the planning process of the headquarters to which he is attached. Allied or coalition headquarters may be reluctant to pass preliminary plans that are subject to change to other headquarters. The presence of an LNO in the planning process can speed coordination of emerging plans among headquarters. The LNO must therefore understand the US commander's overarching intent and strive to keep up to date on the situation. LNOs should attend planning conferences, to make notes of coming operations, and to report them. If any critical change or addition is suggested from his own headquarters, the LNO should obtain these in time to prevent amendment or revision of orders by either headquarters.

The dispatching headquarters has certain responsibilities for its liaison teams. The commander and staff sections must know the identities of their liaison team. Frequently, subordinate units are tasked to provide liaison teams whose identities and qualifications are unknown to the headquarters relying on their abilities and information. This *acquaintance process* can be accomplished by a face-to-face meeting between the responsible headquarters personnel and the liaison team. During this meeting the liaison team should receive a briefing on its mission, the situation, and the unit to which it is being sent. In addition, the team should devote considerable attention to reporting procedures; providing secure, reliable communications and signal operating instructions. Radio is normally the quickest and easiest means of communication. However, give consideration to the fact that the opening and closing of liaison radio nets are positive intelligence indicators. Historically, these nets have proven to be a lucrative source of information for an enemy.

TRAINING

A firm procedure for the training of liaison personnel is difficult to establish—so much depends on the personality traits and military knowledge of the individuals. As a minimum, LNOs must be thoroughly grounded in their own unit's command and staff procedures, doctrine, organization, capabilities, and communications equipment and procedures. LNOs must have the same information on the allied headquarters to which they will go. They must also know the purpose of liaison, the liaison system in effect, reporting methods, records and documents they are to maintain, their mission, and how they should conduct themselves. Finally, the liaison party, section, or mission must train and exercise as a group. A liaison party that is thrown together at the last minute is less effective, and operations may not allow a suitable break-in period. Group training provides a backup capability for the liaison team, allowing it to function even if key personnel are lost and not readily replaced.

SELECTION

Ensure maximum effectiveness of liaison missions by selecting an officer who—

- Has the confidence of the sending unit commander.
- Is favorably known, either personally or by reputation, by the commander and staff of the receiving unit.
- Has a sound and comprehensive knowledge of military operations.
- Is tactful.
- Has experience or training as an LNO.
- Has the necessary language expertise (if required).

DUTIES

Prior to departure, the LNO should—

- Become familiar with the situation of his own unit and that of the receiving unit.
- Clearly understand the mission.
- Ensure that arrangements for communications (signal and transport) are adequate.
- Obtain credentials in writing unless obviously unnecessary.

Upon arrival at the receiving headquarters, the LNO should—

- Report promptly to the commander, state his mission, and show any written directive or credentials.
- Offer assistance to the commander, if appropriate.
- Arrange to obtain information required by the mission.
- Familiarize himself with the situation of the unit.
- Establish communications with his parent headquarters.

During his liaison tour, the LNO should—

- Further harmonious cooperation between the two headquarters.
- Accomplish the mission without interfering with the operations of the headquarters.
- Keep informed of the situation of his own unit and make any information available to the commander and staff of his receiving unit.
- Keep an appropriate record of reports.
- Report on those matters within the scope of his mission.
- Advise the visited unit commander of the contents of reports to be sent to his own headquarters.
- Report promptly to the parent headquarters if unable to accomplish the liaison mission.
- Report departure to the visited unit commander on the completion of his mission.
- Make note of personality traits and idiosyncrasies of key commanders and staff officers of the headquarters/units visited. Such information should remain CONFIDENTIAL.

On return to his own headquarters, the LNO should—

- Report on his mission.
- Promptly transmit any requests of the commander from whose headquarters he has just returned.
- Report on key personalities and general operations of the headquarters from which he has just returned.

The sending headquarters should—

- Give the LNO definite and detailed instructions, in writing if appropriate, as to the liaison mission.
- Inform the LNO of the commander's plans, especially as they affect the unit to which he is to be sent.
- Ensure that adequate facilities are available for communications between the LNO and the sending headquarters.
- Brief the LNO in detail about the type of unit to which he is being sent and key personalities he will encounter.